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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KRENKEL (Austria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 93: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(a) QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/47/214-E/1992/50, A/47/216-E/1992/43, A/47/339, A/47/349, A/47/369, A/47/415 and Corr.1; A/C.3/47/4)

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1. Mr. BROWN (Ghana) said that he regretted that the world social situation continued to deteriorate with each successive year. Twenty years after the adoption by the General Assembly of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, results in that area were still negligible. The end of the cold war, while rekindling hopes for the developing countries, had at the same time engendered new fears: the flow of resources had shifted towards Eastern Europe, leading many foreign companies to relocate from Africa and other third world countries to that area of Europe. As a result, poverty was spreading, further exacerbated by such factors as drought, social strife, destruction of the environment, falling commodity prices and the soaring external debt of the developing countries, which amounted to $1.3 billion. Debt-servicing alone absorbed enormous amounts, which might otherwise have been used to boost investments, promote economic growth and improve educational and health services.

2. Faced with those difficulties, an increasing number of developing countries, particularly in Africa, had been forced to adopt austere structural adjustment programmes. Such had been the case in Ghana since 1983, but the enormous social costs had necessitated the adoption of a programme of action to mitigate the social costs of adjustment.

3. His delegation supported the proposed convening of a world summit for social development which, by stimulating global trade and economic growth, would remove the need for people to migrate in search of better employment prospects. The summit would also provide an opportunity for the United Nations to seek means of solving its serious financial problems, which were adversely affecting implementation of its programmes, particularly those relating to the disabled, youth, ageing and the family.

4. The four plenary meetings of the General Assembly to mark the end of the United Nations Decade of the Disabled highlighted the results achieved over that period, in particular the heightened international awareness of the barriers to the full social integration of disabled persons and the need to move away from charity towards integrated social development planning. As the Secretary-General had stated, however, that greater awareness of the problems

(Mr. Brown, Ghana)

was vitiated by the shortage of resources. For that reason, the issue of financing should be high on the agenda of the forthcoming world summit for social development.

5. His delegation conveyed its sympathy to the Government and people of Egypt on the occasion of its recent catastrophic earthquake. Apart from the heavy toll which it had exacted in human lives, a disaster of that kind, which could strike any country, would add to the number of disabled persons, persons whose functions and activities had been drastically reduced overnight.

6. At the present time, there was every indication that the Commission for Social Development, of which Ghana was a member, would be charged at its thirty-third session in February 1993 with finalizing a draft long-term strategy to implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons beyond the Decade and the draft standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons, which would form the basis of future activities. Ghana hoped that those programmes would be given adequate financial backing.

7. Recognizing the importance of children and young people, Africa was preparing, through the joint efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Senegalese Government, to convene an international conference on assistance to African children. The conference was aimed at encouraging African countries to reorient and, where possible, increase their allocations to programmes that benefit children, to stimulate dialogue between African countries and the international community regarding the survival, protection and development of children in Africa and to revive global interest in Africa in order to ensure lasting support for human development in the continent. His delegation urged all States, particularly those from Africa, and international organizations to make an active contribution to the success of the conference.

8. The Secretary-General, in his report A/47/349, listed the many problems - unemployment, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, to mention a few - faced by the youth of today. His delegation sincerely hoped that the celebration in 1995 of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year would offer an opportunity for reflection on the situation of youth and for the launching of action-oriented programmes for the year 2000 and beyond.

9. It noted with satisfaction the arrangements for the holding of four regional preparatory meetings on the International Year of the Family. It welcomed the offers by the Governments of Tunisia, Colombia, Malta and China to host those meetings, which, it hoped, would promote preparations at regional and national levels for the Year. Experience had proved that national efforts could only succeed if they were supported by international cooperation.

10. Mr. AHAMED (India) drew attention to the Secretary-General's report (E/1992/17) which took stock of the important changes in the world, particularly those that occurred in 1992. The reduction of global tension had permitted a redeployment of resources aimed at fostering development. Furthermore, world leaders were congregating to discuss matters other than those related to peace and security, in particular, social problems. Yet, as the Secretary-General had observed, while many developing countries, including India, had made substantial progress in the socio-economic sectors, the time had come for a reappraisal of policies.

11. For that reason, India had taken several major steps over the past year aimed at reorienting its economic and social sectors, encouraging private investment, generating more jobs and targeting development programmes, particularly those involving the development of human resources, primarily youth and women. Since independence, India had endeavoured to improve the social conditions of its most disadvantaged population groups, particularly in the rural areas, through the provision of housing, drinking water and electricity. Areas such as Kerala and Pondicherry and some districts in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal had achieved 100 per cent literacy.

12. His delegation welcomed the Chilean proposal to convene a world summit for social development. The Constitution of India aimed to ensure balance between the welfare of society as a whole and the fundamental rights of the individual. The responsibility for the implementation of economic and social policies was shared by the central Government and the States. The task was an arduous one, given the country's multiracial, multicultural and multi-ethnic population of 850 million persons with life expectancy on the rise, one third of whom were under 30.

13. According to the Secretary-General's report (A/47/349), in 1990 there were more than 1 billion young people in the world, 179 million of whom lived in the developed countries and 833 million in the developing countries. The message of hope which those figures should have brought was unfortunately overshadowed by the problems which they portended. The lack of vocational skills of most of those young people was compounded by the growth in drug addiction and juvenile delinquency. Ironically, the incidence of juvenile delinquency had risen in many countries, owing to certain socio-economic problems often associated with development, namely, poverty, rapid population growth, inadequate housing, industrialization, urbanization, unemployment, breakdown of the family unit, erosion of traditional values, weakening of community support services, inadequacy of social services and the inability of the education system to respond to new challenges.

14. In order to cope with those problems, India must focus on greater awareness of the potential of young people and, to that end, undertake economic and social restructuring, enact legislation and create appropriate social and government mechanisms.

15. His delegation recalled the five basic approaches emphasized by the United Nations during International Youth Year 1985: providing assistance to

(Mr. Ahamed, India)

Governments in implementing and evaluating national youth policies; preparing multisectoral reports on the needs of youth; organizing workshops on youth-related topics; strengthening channels of communication; and strengthening system-wide cooperation under the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year could provide an opportunity to revitalize the youth movement, which had unfortunately suffered from the United Nations financial constraints.

16. Between 1985 and 1995, the world social milieu had greatly changed. Young people were faced with tougher choices and fewer opportunities in a society increasingly succumbing to drugs, AIDS and street crime.

17. The Government of India had established a department to coordinate youth affairs at the national level. The scheme of national Yuva Kendras or youth centres, established in 1972, was aimed at improving the employment outlook of non-students and rural youth. The centres organized leadership training programmes and social services. Another programme was aimed at involving university and high school students in rural reconstruction programmes and activities to assist the weaker sections of society. Those students were also involved in the promotion of national family welfare programmes and the national literacy mission. Cultural exchanges were also arranged between students from different parts of India and between Indian and foreign students. The Government provided free primary education nation wide and financed the education of meritorious students from the disadvantaged sectors of society. India also had one of the largest affirmative action programmes for students from the most disadvantaged groups and for women.

18. The cooperative movement, which had taken shape in India as early as 1904, had helped ensure a more equitable distribution of wealth. The number of cooperative societies had risen in the agricultural sector alone to 350,000. The institutionalized practice of distributing inputs to farmers and marketing their agricultural produce through cooperatives owned by them had to a large extent eliminated the middleman and had strengthened the cooperative sector in rural areas. The Anand dairy development scheme in the state of Gujarat had served as a model for similar schemes in other countries. In 1990 there were close to 60,000 dairy cooperatives in India.

19. In addition, as part of its programme of economic development of tribal peoples, the Indian Government had organized cooperatives to enable them to function as multi-purpose societies and to ensure that there was no outside exploitation of tribal wealth. Those measures had in the main been successful. The Government had also encouraged the organization of labour contract cooperatives, especially in the building sector, to prevent the exploitation of the labouring classes by stipulating a minimum wage.

20. On the question of disabled persons and of ageing, his delegation noted that the Indian Government had set aside a sum of $70 million in the national budget during the eighth five-year plan, 1992-1997, for the welfare of the disabled. Indian society was strongly supportive of the elderly, as was

(Mr. Ahamed, India)

illustrated by its interest in the concept of the extended family. Most States in India operated some kind of social assistance programmes for persons 55-65 years of age. However, social development could not be achieved by government alone. That was why cooperation across borders, that is, the United Nations, had a role to play in that area.

21. Mr. BURCUOĞLU (Turkey) said that the international community was still undergoing a social crisis that affected all regions and all societies. Poverty, unemployment, insecurity and crime were gaining, sometimes imperilling stability, and creating a crisis that must be overcome as quickly as possible. Experience had shown that neglect of social problems was very costly.

22. Turkey, which was in the throes of very rapid social change and intense urbanization, was attempting to resolve its social problems and to mitigate their consequences. It was trying to improve the quality of life for its people, to guarantee equal opportunity for all and to leave as much room as possible for individual initiative, without neglecting the importance of solidarity and community support. In taking care to ensure that vulnerable groups could assume a productive role in society, it sought to develop its human resources and to give its economic growth a human and social dimension. Its efforts in the social field were oriented mainly towards young people, the family, the elderly and disabled persons.

23. Young people from 15 to 24 years of age made up more than 20 per cent of the Turkish population. Institutional arrangements had been made for their benefit and various job training, apprenticeship and entrepreneurship programmes were in place. Another priority was the protection of youth from such scourges as drug abuse, delinquency and AIDS.

24. The Turkish Government was making efforts to protect the family and help it to adapt better to the changes in society while improving its standard of living. Turkey would participate in the preparation and observation of the International Year of the Family in 1994. A national coordination committee had been established for that purpose and local committees would be set up before long.

25. Ageing of the population, although more evident in the developed countries, was progressing rapidly in developing countries. Turkey was no exception to that general rule. The institutions concerned and the media were becoming more and more aware of the phenomenon of ageing and were alerting public opinion to it. Health services and rehabilitation centres were being organized and the Government was encouraging private sector initiatives for the elderly. It should also be noted that Turkey was one of the co-authors of the Proclamation on ageing that had been adopted by the General Assembly during the International Conference on Ageing.

(Mr. Burcuoğlu, Turkey)

26. On the question of disabled persons, the Turkish Minister of Labour and Social Security had explained the Turkish Government's policy in detail at the General Assembly session marking the close of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. On that occasion, his delegation had distributed a comprehensive report on Turkish policy on disabled persons. In paragraphs 35, 37 and 71 of the Report of the Secretary-General on Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (A/47/415) some of the measures taken by Turkey to benefit the disabled had been cited.

27. Turkey had supported the convening of a world summit for social development as soon as the idea was put forward by the Government of Chile and wished to reiterate its support for that initiative, which should allow leaders of the entire world to make the individual the focus of development and international cooperation activities. In that context, his delegation congratulated Mr. Juan Somavia on the considerable work he had accomplished since his appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General to study the possibility of such a summit, and noted with interest the decision of the Danish Government to host it in Copenhagen.

28. In conclusion, his delegation expressed its support for the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme and noted that, given the seriousness of the crimes linked to illicit drug trafficking, adequate cooperation and coordination between that programme and the old United Nations International Drug Control Programme, as well as between the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Commission and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, was indispensable.

29. Mr. TROTTIER (Canada), speaking on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, said that the Governments of those three countries, which had taken an active part in developing the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, welcomed the establishment of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. It was to be hoped that, with the establishment of the Commission, priorities would be set in a constructive and rational manner in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. The three countries had therefore participated with great interest in the inaugural session of the Commission at Vienna in April 1992.

30. With regard to its priorities for the period 1992-1996 - which must be viewed within the framework of reform and restructuring - the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, rather than trying to deal simultaneously with all the issues falling within its competence, should concentrate its efforts in areas in which Governments had had to invest a great deal of time and money in recent years, namely the control of national and transnational crime, crime prevention in urban areas and the improvement of the management and administration of criminal justice.

(Mr. Trottier, Canada)

31. Transnational criminality was much too large a problem to be pursued by nations acting in isolation. Countries must therefore adopt measures to help each other on a bilateral and multilateral basis. It was true that a great deal of procedural work had been done and that mechanisms had been established to help Member States prosecute individuals in domestic courts. In particular, the progress achieved at the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, in the areas of extradition, mutual assistance and transfer of criminal proceedings, should be noted. However, much more should be done. The three Governments believed that further consideration should be given to the establishment of an international criminal court; in that context, they acknowledged the valuable work carried out by the International Law Commission. It should be noted in that respect that the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, Mrs. Barbara McDougall, had called for the convening of an international meeting of experts in Canada to mobilize legal expertise concerning the drafting of the statute of such a court by the International Law Commission.

32. With regard to the role of the United Nations congresses on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders, Australia, Canada and New Zealand were pleased to note that the setting of priorities and the development of policies, which had formerly fallen to the congresses, would now be left up to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, but hoped that the congresses would continue to play a central role in the implementation of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, including the determination of which issues were likely to become sources of concern in the future.

33. Yet it would be extremely difficult for the Commission to deal with the new priorities of the crime prevention and criminal justice programme if it did not have the necessary resources, as was currently the case. Adequate funding of the programme was therefore necessary, in accordance with the programme of action annexed to General Assembly resolution 46/152, particularly paragraph 32, in which it was recommended that the Secretary-General should upgrade the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch into a division. In that respect, he pointed out that a corrigendum to document A/47/399, entitled "Measures taken to implement the Statement of Principles and Programme of Action of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme", had been circulated. The corrigendum contained the paragraphs missing from the end of the document, which were of great importance.

34. Mr. AL-DOSARI (Bahrain) said that his country attached great importance to social development. Many of the objectives established by the United Nations in that sphere had already been achieved by Bahrain in recent years. The rehabilitation of criminals and their integration into society, the protection and advancement of the family, the provision of health care to all sectors of society and the development of cooperatives were all an integral part of Bahrain's development plans. In accordance with the precepts of the Islamic Shariah, Bahrain made man and respect for his dignity the very centre

(Mr. Al-Dosari, Bahrain)

of its social policy. His Government also attached great importance to social studies and training, the objective being to improve the skills of workers and enable them to better serve society.

35. His delegation believed that it was essential to strengthen the spirit of cooperation and ensure a better sharing of responsibilities among the various sectors of society. It also considered that all States should plan well ahead for their social development, as that was the only way of coping with the serious problems arising for society from phenomena such as disability and ageing. In that respect, Bahrain supported the International Plan of Action on Ageing, the tenth anniversary of which had recently been celebrated by the General Assembly, and the proposals contained in document A/47/415 relating to the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. Bahrain encouraged the establishment of charitable organizations to assist the elderly and disabled and the adoption of legislation providing services for such persons.

36. His delegation deplored the alarming situation of young people described in document A/47/349 and was prepared to give active support to the efforts made at the international level to improve their lot. It supported the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report on cooperatives (A/47/216), in particular with regard to proclaiming an international year of cooperatives. It looked forward to the world summit for social development, to be held in Denmark, which would be an opportunity for all countries to unite their efforts to combat poverty.

37. Mr. STREJCZEK (Poland) said that the role and activity of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice had become more intensive and comprehensive, especially since the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held two years previously, and the Ministerial Meeting held in Paris in November 1991. He welcomed the establishment of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the convening of which only two months after its establishment by the Economic and Social Council marked the determination of the international community to strengthen international cooperation in combating crime.

38. At its first session, the Commission, of which Poland was a member, had proposed concrete measures to give effect to the statement of principles and programme of action adopted by the participants at the Ministerial Meeting in 1991, and then by the General Assembly in resolution 46/152, and had reiterated that the United Nations must assert its leadership in a pragmatic way by rendering practical assistance to Member States and strengthening cooperation. It should also be noted that, in 1992, the Economic and Social Council had adopted resolutions of great importance on strengthening the operational capacity of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, on organized crime, and on preparations for the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

(Mr. Strejczek, Poland)

39. With regard to combating national and transnational crime, a question which the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice had considered at its first session, Poland believed that drug abuse control was one of its most important aspects and welcomed the resolutions adopted by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to establish close cooperation in that field, including the area of money laundering. Poland was directly affected by transnational crime.

40. The implementation of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme should involve greater cooperation between States Members of the United Nations, more effective multilateral and bilateral legal assistance, greater sharing of information on crime trends and control and the provision of practical training for law-enforcement officials. The United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme was an effective tool but its objectives could be reached only if the United Nations Office at Vienna had the necessary staff and financial resources.

41. Mr. AL-TAEY (Oman) noted that, according to statistics, disabled persons represented some 10 per cent of the overall population in all societies. As such, they constituted a significant human resource; it was therefore essential that they should participate in national development. All means should be employed to integrate disabled persons into the society in which they lived. Parallel action should also be taken to remove the causes of disablement.

42. The Omani Government had implemented various measures in the interest of disabled persons. First, labour legislation stipulated that a certain percentage of jobs should be reserved for them. In addition, they benefited from financial assistance and extremely comprehensive social cover.

43. Similarly, in line with a tradition which was an intrinsic part of Arab civilization, the elderly were accorded great respect and enjoyed full protection. They were honoured by society, which valued their experience. According to international standards, anyone aged 60 and over was regarded as an elderly person. At both physical and psychological levels, everything had been done to ensure that they enjoyed good living conditions.

44. With regard to young people, the Omani Government had, in accordance with United Nations principles, embraced policies which ensured their growth and development. At national level, youth centres and institutions had been established. In addition, the Government was doing its utmost to ensure that young people played a part in international organizations.

45. Mr. RANASINGHE (Sri Lanka) said that, more than ever, the emerging consensus was that, in the search for a new world order, peace and security were indissolubly linked to the need to place people at the centre of all development endeavours, the aim being to promote better standards of life in larger freedom, as stated in the United Nations Charter.

(Mr. Ranasinghe, Sri Lanka)

46. In the developing countries, social development issues were all the more serious in that development efforts continued to be hampered by external factors, which in turn impeded the success of the structural adjustment programmes undertaken by those countries, where a high political and social cost was paid.

47. While it was appropriate to welcome the initiative to convene a world summit for social development, it was to be hoped that the summit would provide an opportunity to advocate, at the highest political level, renewed international cooperation and address the acute economic causes of social problems.

48. Like the World Bank, Sri Lanka believed that social action was a profitable investment. The country could pride itself on having obtained satisfactory results in the area of human development, such as high life expectancy, low infant mortality, significant calorie intake, high adult literacy and effective primary health care. However, that did not mask the considerable difficulties still to be overcome, namely the provision of employment, capital and technology for increased production and a social security system for disadvantaged groups. His delegation also regarded as extremely apposite the themes proposed for the summit by the Secretary-General, namely poverty alleviation, employment and social cohesion.

49. Poverty alleviation could no longer be regarded as simply an act of charity. It was now agreed that it represented an indispensable component of sustainable development and social cohesion. The States members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) had launched a major programme aimed at self-reliant income generation for the poor and their welfare. The international financing institutions should support that type of initiative in order to respond to non-military threats to peace and security during the current decade and beyond. The proposed world summit should serve in particular to emphasize the positive effects that poverty alleviation could have on curbing environmental degradation and allowing sustainable development.

50. His delegation shared the concern for youth expressed by the Secretary-General in his report on the subject (A/47/349), in which he indicated that the momentum created by the International Youth Year seemed to have declined. A world programme of action should therefore be formulated which would, over the next decade, reverse the trend of deterioration which characterized the situation of youth. The number of young people was particularly large in the developing countries, where they were often prevented from finding gainful employment by economic factors beyond their control. That was the case even where, paradoxically, the quality of training received had boosted their expectations, and, eventually, exacerbated their frustration. The situation could even strain the unique social security network represented by the family unit.

(Mr. Ranasinghe, Sri Lanka)

51. One third of Sri Lanka's population was between the ages of 15 and 35. Youth issues therefore represented a high national priority. Measures taken by the Ministry for Youth Affairs were complemented by those of the National Youth Services Council, which implemented programmes on anti-narcotic action, youth guidance and counselling, the building of youth villages and the promotion of cultural activities. Moreover, the national programme of poverty alleviation focused specifically on poor youth, who received financial assistance to help them establish their own enterprises.

52. The unrest and discontent among youth also arose from a feeling of being alienated from political and social life, although their participation was a key to stability in any democratic society, particularly at a time when competitiveness and modern technology threatened to bring about the loss of identity and even the abandonment of traditional values. An independent Commission on Youth in Sri Lanka had therefore recommended in 1989 concerted action to strengthen the participation of youth in socio-political decision-making processes. Hence, young people now played a greater part in the management of local groups.

53. Action undertaken at the national level was enriched by an exchange of data, experience and know-how at the regional and international levels. The initiative taken by Sri Lanka and the other States members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation to declare 1993 Youth Year in the region would provide an opportunity for such exchanges. That initiative should provide political support for consideration of questions relating to young people and revitalize international cooperation in a sector which had not yielded the results that had been expected after a promising start during the International Youth Year.

54. Mrs. DROZD (Belarus) said that the Charter of the United Nations vested in the Organization a dual mandate: to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. The organizations in the United Nations system set social development among those priorities on which States should focus their cooperation, as was demonstrated by, inter alia, the International Plan of Action on Ageing (1982), the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (1982), the Guidelines for Further Planning and Suitable Follow-up in the Field of Youth, the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), and the draft declaration on the elimination of violence against women (1992). The major resolutions adopted by the Second (Social) Committee of the Economic and Social Council at its most recent session were a further confirmation. Belarus was a sponsor of the resolution in which the Economic and Social Council recommended the convening of a world summit for social development on the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, in 1995. That recommendation deserved to be received all the more favourably as it was the well-being of mankind itself that lay at the

(Mrs. Drozd, Belarus)

heart of the planned meeting. One of the fundamental objectives of the meeting would be to examine the political, social and economic issues posed by development in a world marked by a sharp deterioration in the situation of more than one fifth of its population. Poverty, unemployment, crime and national hatred had reached such a scale that it was necessary to rethink completely the way in which social problems should be addressed.

55. It was not by chance that Belarus had an interest in the summit. A comparative analysis of social policies and of the systems of social welfare of countries that had attained different levels of development was a topical subject for the young Republic of Belarus, which had just achieved independence. The transition from one economic system to another compelled Belarus to rethink socio-economic issues completely and, moreover, to do so while in the grip of the worsening economic crisis that had accompanied the collapse of the Soviet Union. Belarus suffered from inflation and unemployment and its population's welfare was deteriorating. The socio-economic and political upheavals had been further complicated by the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl power plant.

56. The Government of Belarus had reacted by launching an economic stabilization and social welfare programme. It had set up an employment agency and a retirement fund and promulgated laws on the welfare of disabled persons and war veterans. A project for a State social security system was being studied. The Supreme Council of the Republic of Belarus, which was currently holding its regular session in Minsk, was considering legislation relating to the indexation of income to inflation, employment and health insurance.

57. While earnestly calling for the convening of the summit, his delegation none the less considered that the preparatory process could be entrusted to the Commission for Social Development and that the summit itself could be held within the framework of the regular session of the General Assembly, thereby permitting the United Nations to effect a saving that was fully justified by its current financial circumstances.

58. Belarus considered that the world targets on ageing for the year 2001 and the guidelines for the establishment of national targets on ageing deserved serious consideration as they had been designed to assist Member States to define and achieve their own targets in that sphere.

59. Her delegation noted with concern that, despite some positive achievements, the World Youth Campaign, launched as part of the International Youth Year, had not maintained its initial impetus. It was all the more important therefore to continue the planning and suitable follow-up activities in that field as the future of the whole of mankind depended on the solutions that the international community would find for the problems of its younger generations. The fact that the situation of youth had barely improved was principally attributable to the worsening of the world economic and social

(Mrs. Drozd, Belarus)

situation, which had brought with it a sharp decline in living standards, particularly among the most vulnerable groups of the population, including young people, as well as a reduction in the funds allocated to youth programmes. The effectiveness of the action undertaken by the United Nations in that field could be improved if recognition was given to the importance of the political role played by young people, if they were more closely associated with United Nations programmes and organs and if a place was made for them within delegations. The links between national and international youth organizations should be tightened, the exchange of information between specialized non-governmental organizations and the United Nations improved, the draft world youth programme of action towards the year 2000 should be completed, the activities proposed by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs with a view to the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year should be implemented, and questions concerning youth should be placed on the agenda of the world summit for social development.

60. Questions relating to the family were of deep concern to her delegation, as her country's economic and social difficulties aggravated the problems faced by families, in particular women. Infant mortality was high (12.1 per 1,000 live births in 1991), morbidity among newborn children was increasing, and ever larger numbers of children suffered from chronic illnesses or disabilities. Almost 20,000 orphans and other children were wards of the State in Belarus. Her delegation accordingly attached great importance to the declaration of 1994 as the International Year of the Family, which it saw as an opportunity for the adoption of measures which would truly give effect to all the instruments that the situation of women and children had prompted the international community to adopt.

61. As the International Cooperative Alliance would celebrate its one hundredth anniversary in 1995, Belarus supported the proposal made by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1992/25 that the first Saturday of each year should be observed as an international day of cooperatives.

62. Lastly, her delegation welcomed the establishment of a new organ of the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which opened up new prospects for international cooperation in combating crime.

63. Mr. VENTEGODT (Denmark) said that the five Nordic countries which he represented, namely, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and his own country, were extremely concerned over the deteriorating social situation, not only in the developing countries, but also in several industrialized countries where unemployment, marginalization and poverty were on the rise. At least 200 million people were living below the poverty line in the industrial market-economy countries, in the former Soviet Union and in Eastern European countries. That situation led to high rates of drug addiction, homelessness and suicide. In many parts of the world, conflicts between political factions were causing immense human suffering, as well as extensive physical damage to

(Mr. Ventegodt, Denmark)

the economic infrastructure. Many political regimes were carrying out flagrant violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of their peoples and ethnic minorities.

64. The Nordic countries believed that it was necessary to address all those aspects of human suffering in order to promote social and economic development. The eradication of poverty in the world could only be achieved through the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the introduction of democratic practices and, above all, the elimination of the widening gap between rich and poor countries. It was time to realize that social development was a prerequisite for economic development and that the two must go hand in hand. Social development policies should focus on households, bearing in mind that women were often the principal caretakers of the family. Lastly, economic and social development must be combined with the protection of natural resources.

65. The Nordic countries recognized the seriousness of the problem of drug abuse at all levels and believed that it could be solved only if the demand for drugs was curbed and alternative sources of income were provided to drug-producing countries. The social and health costs of alcohol abuse should also be given greater prominence by the international community in its debates.

66. With regard to crime, the international community, in view of the limited resources available for crime prevention and control, should give priority to the following areas: transnational crime, including organized crime, economic crime and money laundering.

67. As for the situation of disabled persons, resources devoted to disability issues within the United Nations system should be increased. The United Nations development organizations should integrate the needs of disabled persons into their regular programming of activities.

68. Referring to forthcoming major international events, he commended the convening of the World Conference on Human Rights, scheduled to take place in June 1993, which would provide an opportunity to review progress made in the field of human rights since the adoption of the Universal Declaration. The Nordic countries also attached great importance to the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. They wished to stress that people were a resource and not a threat and that the underlying problem was that of poverty. They therefore welcomed the proposal for the convening of a world summit for social development in 1995. That summit should provide an opportunity to put people at the centre of development and to address such basic issues as poverty, in particular the feminization of poverty; the situation of children, youth, the elderly and the disabled; and productive employment and social cohesion, the latter being understood as the need to create a social environment which promoted the participation of the population. The summit would also provide an opportunity to emphasize the importance of maintaining a proper balance between economic incentives and a fair distribution of resources, in order to contribute to sustainable

(Mr. Ventegodt, Denmark)

development. Finally, the world summit should contribute to the overall objective of development and the consolidation of democracy. Non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to participate actively in the summit and the preparatory process should take full account of other United Nations conferences relating to social questions. Funding for the summit should be provided through United Nations budgetary resources and, if necessary, through the provision of additional resources. Denmark was proposing Copenhagen as the venue for the world social summit. The Nordic countries supported that proposal, thus confirming their commitment to social development.

AGENDA ITEM 91: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued)

Introduction of draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.10

69. Mrs. ZINDOGA (Zimbabwe), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.10 on behalf of Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and her own country, said that currently, 93 States had ratified or acceded to the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. The draft resolution underlined the importance of the universal ratification of the Convention and appealed to those States that had not yet done so to ratify that instrument without further delay. She hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.